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University of Toronto
Faculty of Music

Opera Division

*Spring
Opera
Scenes*

Friday, May 3, 1996
8 pm

MacMillan Theatre
Edward Johnson Building

PROGRAMME

Don Pasquale

Act III; Scenes 1 and 2 (in English)

Gaetano Donizetti

(1797 - 1848)

Norina
Don Pasquale
Dr. Malatesta
A Servant

Monica Walsh
Taras Kulish
Marc Sottile
Sabrina Santelli

Musical Director
Stage Director
Pianist

Michael Evans
Michael Patrick Albano
Stephen Ralls

Don Pasquale, determined to have a young bride and equally firm that his nephew Ernesto should not marry, has taken the advice of a friend, Dr. Malatesta, and married a young widow, Norina. He believes that she is "Sofronia", Dr. Malatesta's sister, whereas she is in fact the woman Ernesto wants to marry. To teach Pasquale a lesson, Norina is behaving outrageously and even slaps his face. For a moment she pities Pasquale. As she leaves, Malatesta arrives and proceeds to advise Pasquale how a husband should behave.

La Bohème

Act IV (in Italian)

Giacomo Puccini

(1858 - 1924)

Rodolfo
Marcello
Schaunard
Colline
Mimi
Musetta

Michael Colvin
John McGillis
Colin Roche
David Jefferies
Lilac Caña
Monica Huisman

Musical Director
Stage Director
Pianist

Sabatino Vacca
Constance Fisher
Emily Hamper

Rodolfo and Marcello are found in their cheerless attic bemoaning the absence of the fickle Musetta and the apparently faithless Mimi. Schaunard and Colline join them, bringing a little food, and they all dance gaily to keep up their spirits. In the middle of a mock duel which follows, the door bursts open and Musetta enters in the utmost agitation, announcing that Mimi waits below with hardly enough strength to climb the stairs. All four men help the fragile, half-frozen girl to a bed. When Rodolfo and Mimi are finally left alone, the girl wistfully recalls their first happy days together and seems to fall peacefully asleep.

INTERMISSION

La Traviata

Act II (in Italian)

Giuseppe Verdi

(1813 - 1901)

Violetta Valery
Alfredo Germont
Giorgio Germont
Annina
Giuseppe

Marian Sjölander
David Pomeroy
James Westman
Sabrina Santelli
Steve Gokool

Musical Director
Stage Director
Pianist

James Fraser Craig
Michael Patrick Albano
Laura Friesen

In the first act of the opera, Violetta Valery, a celebrated Parisian courtesan, has been introduced to Alfredo Germont, a young man of a highly respected family. The couple fall in love and Violetta gladly abandons her meaningless existence to find happiness with Alfredo in a country villa. Unknown to Alfredo, Violetta is forced to sell all her possessions in order to maintain their present ménage. When this information is revealed to Alfredo by Violetta's maid, Annina, he rushes off to Paris to raise money of his own. Violetta, somewhat puzzled by his hasty departure, receives a letter from a Parisian friend inviting her to a party. The social whirl of the city no longer means anything to her and she puts aside the invitation. When a visitor is announced, she

is surprised and briefly ill-at-ease to find that it is Alfredo's father. His abrupt and insulting manner quickly vanishes as Violetta reveals a dignity he little expected. He tells her that Alfredo's sister is shortly to marry, but that the relationship of Violetta and Alfredo is jeopardizing the proposed match. Violetta understands the problem and reluctantly agrees that she and Alfredo could part for a period. This is not enough for Germont. Even though Violetta tells him that a deadly illness threatens her life, he demands a complete renunciation from her. With heavy heart, Violetta accedes to his wishes.

Thaïs

Act V; Scene 2 (in French)

Jules Massenet

(1842 - 1912)

Thaïs
Athaniel
Albine

Jooryun Kim
Stephen King
Liesel Fedkenheuer

Musical Director
Stage Director
Pianist

Michael Evans
Michael Patrick Albano
Catherine Maguire

Athaniel, a Cenobite monk, has converted Thaïs, the most shameless courtesan in Egypt and she has entered a monastery. Now Athaniel realizes to his horror that it was not religious zeal that caused him to convert Thaïs, but an all too earthly interest in her. In a dream he sees Thaïs on the point of death. He rushes to the convent where the Abbess, Albine, tells him that Thaïs will be dead by nightfall, and her sins will be forgiven. Thaïs appears, and in her last moments of life, talks only of God and salvation while Athaniel is consumed by his passion for her.

Orpheus in the Underworld

Act I (in English)

Jacques Offenbach

(1819 - 1880)

Euridice
Orpheus
Aristeus (Pluto)
Public Opinion
Shepherdesses

Olga Primak
Michael Colvin
David Jefferies
Kathleen Flynn
Alexandra Tait
Maria Kowan
Ayelet Porzecanski

Musical Director
Stage Director
Pianist
Violin Soloist

James Fraser Craig
Constance Fisher
Sabatino Vacca
Max Mandel

When the curtain rose on the première of *Orphée aux Enfers* in the tiny Bouffes-Parisiens Theatre on October 21, 1858, it signaled an event as significant in the history of operetta as the opening of *Oklahoma* was to the development of the American musical. To gratify the pleasure-seeking mood of Paris under the Second Empire, Jacques Offenbach had created a new type of musical theatre characterized by wit and charm, burlesque that poked fun lightly and music that effervesced with gaiety. The epitome of these components, *Orphée*, ranks as a classic innovation and the first true operetta. The later Viennese operettas and the English school of Gilbert and Sullivan derived much inspiration from Offenbach, but none ever surpassed his brilliant synthesis of satirical drama and enchanting music.

The Legend of Orpheus and Eurydice

Orpheus is one of the most celebrated figures of Greek mythology and echoes of this tale of conjugal love and fidelity are found in the folklore of other countries right up to our own time. As a son of the muse, Calliope, Orpheus was a musician of such power and sweetness that even the wild creatures would gather to listen to him. Marriage to the beautiful dryad, Eurydice, brought his happiness to ultimate, but all too brief fulfilment. Aristaeus, a son of Apollo and god of bee-keeping, wine-making and other forms of husbandry, was attracted to Eurydice. Fleeing his unwelcome attentions, the young bride trod on a venomous serpent and instantly died from its bite. Orpheus, desolate with grief, followed her to Hades and his music and sorrow so touched the powers of death, that he was given permission to return with her to the mortal world. However, a condition was imposed: Orpheus would lead his wife, but under no circumstances could look back. In the agony of uncertainty that she was indeed following, Orpheus ultimately turned only to see her slip away forever.



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